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AN
E P I S T L E

TO

WILLIAM HOGARTH.



Price Two Shillings and Sixpence.



A N
E P I S T L E
T O
WILLIAM HOGARTH.

By C. CHURCHILL.

Ut Pictura, Poefis.

HOR.

T H E S E C O N D E D I T I O N .

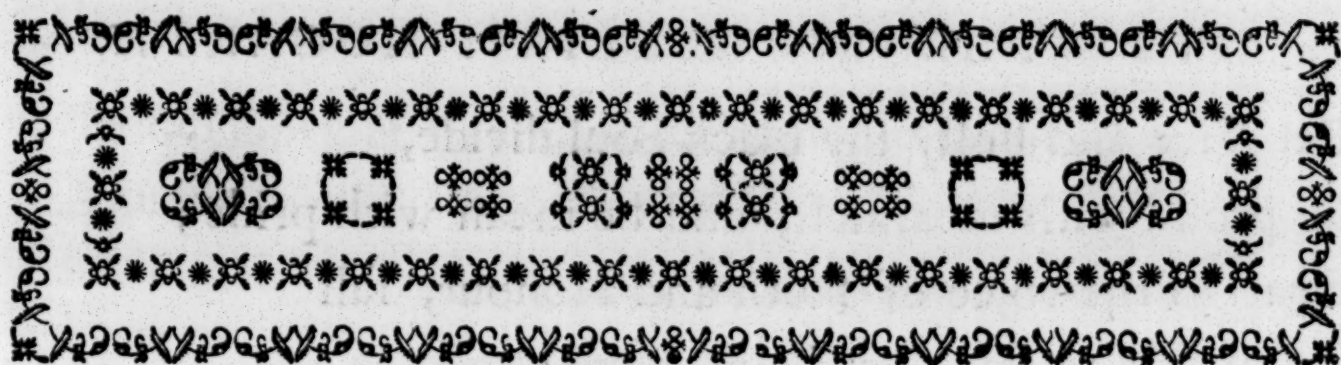
L O N D O N :

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M.DCC.LXIII.





A N
E P I S T L E
T O

William Hogarth.



Mongst the sons of men how few are known
Who dare be just to merit not their own!
Superior virtue and superior sense
To knaves and fools will always give offence ;
Nay, men of real worth can scarcely bear,
So nice is Jealousy, a rival there.

BE wicked as thou wilt, do all that's base,
Proclaim thyself the monster of thy race ;

B

Let

Let Vice and Folly thy black Soul divide,
 Be proud with meanness, and be mean with pride;
 Deaf to the voice of Faith and Honour, fall
 From side to side, yet be of none at all;
 Spurn all those charities, those sacred ties,
 Which Nature in her bounty, good as wise,
 To work our safety, and ensure her plan,
 Contriv'd to bind, and rivet man to man;
 Lift against Virtue Pow'r's oppressive rod,
 Betray thy Country, and deny thy God;
 And, in one gen'ral comprehensive line,
 To group, which volume's scarcely could define,
 Whate'er of Sin and Dulness can be said,
 Join to a F----'s heart a D----'s head,
 Yet may'st thou pass unnotic'd in the throng,
 And, free from Envy, safely sneak along.
 The rigid Saint, by whom no mercy's shewn
 To Saints whose lives are better than his own,
 Shall spare thy crimes, and Wit, who never once
 Forgave a Brother, shall forgive a Dunce.

But should thy soul, form'd in some luckless hour,
 Vile Int'rest scorn, nor madly grasp at pow'r;

Should

EPISTLE TO WILLIAM HOGARTH. 3

Should Love of Fame, in ev'ry noble mind
 A brave disease, with love of Virtue join'd,
 Spur thee to deeds of pith, where Courage tried
 In Reason's court is amply justified;
 Or, fond of knowledge and averse to strife,
 Should'st Thou prefer the calmer walk of life;
 Should'st Thou, by pale and sickly Study led,
 Pursue coy Science to the Fountain head;
 Virtue thy guide, and Public Good thy end,
 Should ev'ry thought to our improvement tend,
 To curb the passions, to enlarge the mind,
 Purge the sick weal, and humanize mankind;
 Rage in her eye, and Malice in her breast,
 Redoubled Horror grinning on her crest,
 Fiercer each snake, and sharper ev'ry dart,
 Quick from her cell shall madd'ning ENVY start.
 Then shalt Thou find, but find, alas! too late,
 How vain is worth! how short is Glory's date!
 Then shalt Thou find, whilst Friends with Foes conspire
 To give more proof than Virtue would desire,
 Thy danger chiefly lies in acting well;
 No crime's so great as daring to excell.

WHILST

4 EPISTLE TO WILLIAM HOGARTH.

WHILST SATIRE thus, disdaining mean controul,
Urg'd the free dictates of an honest soul,
CANDOUR, who with the charity of *Paul*,
Still thinks the best, whene'er she thinks at all,
With the sweet milk of human kindness blest'd,
The furious ardour of my zeal repress'd.

CANST Thou, with more than usual warmth, she cry'd,
Thy malice to indulge, and feed thy pride,
Canst Thou, severe by Nature as Thou art,
With all that wond'rous rancour in thy heart,
Delight to torture Truth ten thousand ways,
To spin detraction forth from themes of praise,
To make VICE fit, for purposes of strife,
And draw the Hag much larger than the life,
To make the good seem bad, the bad seem worse,
And represent our Nature as our curse?

DOETH not humanity condemn that zeal
Which tends to aggravate and not to heal?
Doth not discretion warn thee of disgrace,
And danger grinning stare thee in the face?
Loud as the Drum, which spreading terrour round
From emptiness acquires the pow'r of sound,

Doth

Doth not the voice of NORTON strike thy ear,
And the pale MANSFIELD chill thy soul with fear?
Do'st Thou, fond man, believe thyself secure,
Because Thou'rt honest, and because Thou'rt poor?
Do'st Thou on Law and Liberty depend?
Turn, turn thy eyes, and view thy injur'd friend.
Art Thou beyond the ruffian gripe of Pow'r,
When WILKES, *prejudg'd*, is sentenc'd to the Tow'r?
Do'st Thou by Privilege exemption claim,
When Privilege is little more than name?
Or to Prerogative (that glorious ground
On which State-scoundrels oft have safety found)
Do'st Thou pretend, and there a sanction find,
Unpunish'd, thus to Libel human kind?

WHEN Poverty, the Poet's constant crime,
Compell'd thee, all unfit to trade in rime,
Had not Romantic notions turn'd thy head,
Had'st Thou not valued Honour more than Bread,
Had Int'rest, pliant Int'rest been thy guide,
And had not Prudence been debauch'd by Pride,
In flatt'ry's stream Thou would'st have dipp'd thy pen,
Applied to great, and not to honest men,

C

Nor

Nor should Conviction have seduc'd thy heart
To take the weaker, tho' the better part.

WHAT but rank Folly, for thy curse decreed,
Could into SATIRE's barren path mislead,
When, open to thy view, before thee lay,
Soul-soothing PANEGYRIC's flow'ry way?
There might the Muse have saunter'd at her ease,
And, pleasing others, learn'd herself to please,
Lords should have listen'd to the sugar'd treat,
And *Ladies*, simp'ring, own it vastly sweet;
Rogues, in thy prudent verse with virtue grac'd,
Fools, mark'd by thee as prodigies of Taste,
Must have forbid, pouring preferments down,
Such Wit, such Truth as thine to quit the gown.
Thy sacred Brethren too (for they, no less
Than Laymen, bring their off'rings to success)
Had hail'd Thee good if great, and paid the vow
Sincere as that they pay to God, whilst Thou
In *Lawn* had'st whisper'd to a sleeping croud,
As dull as R----, and half as proud.

PEACE, CANDOUR---wisely had'st thou said, and well,
Could Int'rest in this breast one moment dwell,

Could

Could she, with prospect of success, oppose
 The firm resolves, which from Conviction rose.
 I cannot truckle to a Fool of State,
 Nor take a favour from the man I hate.
 Free leave have others by such means to shine;
 I scorn their practice, they may laugh at mine.

BUT in this charge, forgetful of thyself,
 Thou hast assum'd the maxims of that elf,
 Whom God in wrath for man's dishonour fram'd,
 CUNNING in Heav'n, amongst us PRUDENCE nam'd,
 That *servile* PRUDENCE, which I leave to those
 Who dare not be my Friends, can't be my Foes.

HAD I, with cruel and oppressive rimes,
 Pursued, and turn'd misfortunes into crimes;
 Had I, when Virtue gasping lay and low,
 Join'd tyrant Vice, and added woe to woe;
 Had I made Modesty in blushes speak,
 And drawn the tear down Beauty's sacred cheek;
 Had I (damn'd then) in thought debas'd my lays,
 To wound that Sex, which Honour bids me praise;
 Had I, from vengeance by base views betray'd,
 In endless night sunk injur'd AYLIFF's shade;

Had

8 EPISTLE TO WILLIAM HOGARTH.

Had I (which Satirists of mighty name,
 Renown'd in rime, rever'd for *moral* fame,
 Have done before, whom Justice shall pursue
 In future verse) brought forth to public view
 A noble Friend, and made his foibles known,
 Because his worth was greater than my own;
 Had I spar'd those (so *Prudence* had decreed)
 Whom, God so help me at my greatest need,
 I ne'er will spare, those vipers to their king
 Who smooth their looks, and flatter whilst they sting,
 Or had I not taught patriot zeal to boast
 Of those, who flatter least, but love him most;
 Had I thus finn'd, my stubborn soul should bend
 At CANDOUR's voice, and take, as from a friend,
 The deep rebuke; Myself should be the first
 To hate myself, and stamp my Muse accurs'd

BUT shall my arm----forbid it manly Pride,
 Forbid it Reason, warring on my side----
 For vengeance lifted high, the stroke forbear,
 And hang suspended in the desert air,
 Or to my trembling side unnerv'd sink down,
 Palsied, forsooth, by CANDOUR's half-made frown?

When

EPISTLE TO WILLIAM HOGARTH. 9

When Justice bids me on, shall I delay
Because insipid CANDOUR bars my way?
When she, of all alike the puling friend,
Would disappoint my Satire's noblest end,
When she to villains would a sanction give,
And shelter those who are not fit to live,
When she would screen the guilty from a blush,
And bids me spare whom Reason bids me crush,
All leagues with CANDOUR proudly I resign;
She cannot be for Honour's turn, nor mine.

YET come, cold monitor, half foe, half friend,
Whom Vice can't fear, whom Virtue can't commend,
Come CANDOUR, by thy dull indifference known,
Thou equal-blooded judge, Thou lukewarm drone,
Who, fashion'd without feelings, do'st expect
We call that Virtue, which we know Defect,
Come, and observe the Nature of our crimes,
The gross and rank complexion of the times,
Observe it well, and then review my plan;
Praise if you will, or censure if you can.

WHILST Vice presumptuous lords it as in sport,
And Piety is only known at Court;

D

Whilst

10 EPISTLE TO WILLIAM HOGARTH.

Whilst wretched LIBERTY expiring lies
 Beneath the fatal burthen of EXCISE;
 Whilst nobles act, without one touch of shame,
 What men of humble rank would blush to name;
 Whilst Honour's plac'd in highest point of view,
 Worshipp'd by those, who Justice never knew;
 Whilst bubbles of Distinction waste in play
 The hours of rest, and blunder thro' the day,
 With dice and cards opprobrious vigils keep,
 Then turn to ruin empires in their sleep;
 Whilst Fathers, by relentless passion led,
 Doom worthy injur'd sons to beg their bread,
 Merely with ill-got, ill-fav'd wealth to grace
 An alien, abject, poor, proud, upstart race;
 Whilst MARTIN flatters only to betray,
 And WEBB gives up his dirty soul for pay;
 Whilst titles serve to hush a villain's fears;
 Whilst Peers are Agents made, and Agents Peers;
 Whilst base betrayers are themselves betray'd,
 And makers ruin'd by the thing they made;
 Whilst C---, false to God and man, for gold,
 Like the old traitor who a Saviour sold,
 To shame his Master, Friend, and Father gives;
 Whilst BUTE remains in pow'r, whilst HOLLAND lives;

Can

EPISTLE TO WILLIAM HOGARTH. 11

Can Satire want a subject, where Disdain
By Virtue fir'd may point her sharpest strain,
Where, cloath'd with thunder, Truth may roll along,
And CANDOUR justify the rage of song?

SUCH Things, such Men before Thee, such an age,
Where Rancour, great as thine, may glut her rage,
And sicken e'en to surfeit, where the pride
Of Satire, pouring down in fullest tide,
May spread wide vengeance round, yet all the while
Justice behold the ruin with a smile,
Whilst I, thy foe misdeem'd, cannot condemn,
Nor disapprove that rage I wish to stem,
Wilt thou, degen'rate and corrupted, chuse
To soil the credit of thy haughty Muse?
With Fallacy, most infamous, to stain
Her Truth, and render all her anger vain?
When I beheld Thee incorrect but bold,
A various comment on the Stage unfold;
When Play'rs on Play'rs before thy Satire fell,
And poor Reviews conspir'd thy wrath to swell;
When States and Statesmen next became thy care,
And only kings were safe if thou wast there;

Thy

Thy ev'ry word I weigh'd in Judgment's scale,
 And in thy ev'ry word found Truth prevail.
 Why do'st Thou now to Falshood meanly fly?
 Not even CANDOUR can forgive a lie.

BAD as Men are, why should thy frantic rimes
 Traffick in slander, and invent new crimes,
 Crimes which, existing only in thy mind,
 Weak Spleen brings forth to blacken all Mankind.
 By pleasing hopes we lure the human heart
 To practise Virtue, and improve in Art;
 To thwart these ends (which proud of honest Fame
 A noble Muse would cherish and inflame)
 Thy *Drudge* contrives, and in our full career
 Sicklies our hopes with the pale hue of Fear;
 Tells us that all our labours are in vain,
 That what we seek, we never can obtain,
 That, dead to Virtue, lost to Nature's plan,
 ENVY possesses the whole race of man,
 That Worth is criminal, and Danger lies,
 Danger extreme, in being good and wise.

'Tis a rank falshood; search the world around,
 There cannot be so vile a monster found

Not one so vile, on whom suspicions fall
 Of that gross guilt, which you impute to all.
 Approv'd by those who disobey her laws,
 Virtue from Vice itself extorts applause.
 Her very foes bear witness to her state;
 They will not love her, but they cannot hate.
 Hate Virtue for herself, with spite pursue
 Merit for Merit's sake! Might this be true,
 I would renounce my Nature with disdain,
 And, with the beasts that perish, graze the plain:
 Might this be true, had we so far fill'd up
 The measure of our crimes, and from the cup
 Of guilt so deeply drank, as not to find,
 Thirsting for sin, one drop, one dreg behind,
 Quick ruin must involve this flaming ball,
 And Providence in Justice crush us all.
 None but the damn'd, and amongst them the worst,
 Those who for double guilt are doubly curs'd,
 Can be so lost; nor can the worst of all
 At once into such deep damnation fall;
 By painful slow degrees they reach this crime,
 Which e'en in Hell must be a work of time.

14 EPISTLE TO WILLIAM HOGARTH.

CEASE then thy guilty rage, thou wayward son,
 With the foul gall of discontent o'er-run,
 Lift to my voice----be honest, if you can,
 Nor slander Nature in her fav'rite man.
 But if thy spirit, resolute in ill,
 Once having err'd, persists in error still,
 Go on at large, no longer worth my care,
 And freely vent those blasphemies in air,
 Which I would stamp as false, tho' on the tongue
 Of Angels, the injurious slander hung.

DUP'D by thy vanity (that cunning elf
 Who snares the Coxcomb to deceive himself)
 Or blinded by thy rage, did'st Thou believe
 That We too, coolly, would ourselves deceive,
 That We, as sterling, falsehood would admit,
 Because 'twas season'd with some little wit?
 When Fiction rises pleasing to the eye,
 Men will believe, because they love the lye;
 But Truth herself, if clouded with a frown,
 Must have some solemn proof to pass her down.
 Hast Thou, maintaining that which must disgrace
 And bring into contempt the human race,

Hast

EPISTLE TO WILLIAM HOGARTH. 15

Haſt Thou, or can'ſt Thou, in Truth's ſacred court,
To ſave thy credit, and thy cauſe ſupport,
Produce one proof, make out one real ground
On which ſo great, ſo groſs a charge to found?
Nay, doſt Thou know one man (let that appear,
From wilful falſhood I'll proclaim thee clear)
One man ſo loſt, to Nature ſo untrue,
From whom this gen'ral charge thy raſhneſs drew?
On this foundation ſhalt thou ſtand or fall---
Prove that in One, which you have charg'd in All.
Reason determines, and it muſt be done ;
'Mongſt men, or paſt, or preſent, name me One.

HOGARTH---I take thee, CANDOUR, at thy word,
Accept thy proffer'd terms, and will be heard ;
Thee have I heard with virulence declaim,
Nothing retain'd of Candour but the name ;
By Thee have I been charg'd, in angry ſtrains,
With that mean falſhood which my ſoul diſdains----
HOGARTH ſtand forth----Nay hang not thus aloof----
Now, CANDOUR, now Thou ſhall receive ſuch proof,
Such damning proof, that henceforth Thou ſhalt fear
To tax my wrath, and own my conduct clear---

HOGARTH

16 EPISTLE TO WILLIAM HOGARTH.

HOGARTH stand forth----I dare thee to be tried
 In that great Court, where Conscience must preside ;
 At that most solemn bar hold up thy hand ;
 Think before whom, on what account, you stand----
 Speak, but consider well, from first to last
 Review thy life, weigh ev'ry action past----
 Nay, you shall have no reason to complain----
 Take longer time, and view them o'er again----
 Can'st Thou remember from thy earliest youth,
 And as thy God must judge Thee, speak the truth,
 A single instance where, *Self* laid aside,
 And Justice taking place of fear and pride,
 Thou with an equal eye didst GENIUS view,
 And give to Merit what was Merit's due?
 Genius and Merit are a sure offence,
 And thy Soul sickens at the name of Sense :
 Is any one so foolish to succeed,
 On ENVY's altar he is doom'd to bleed ;
 HOGARTH, a guilty pleasure in his eyes,
 The place of Executioner supplies.
 See how he glotes, enjoys the sacred feast,
 And proves himself by cruelty a priest.

WHILST

EPISTLE TO WILLIAM HOGARTH. 17

WHILST the weak Artist, to thy whims a slave,
 Would bury all those powr's which Nature gave,
 Would suffer blank concealment to obscure
 Those rays, thy Jealousy could not endure,
 To feed thy vanity would rust unknown,
 And to secure thy credit blast his own,
 In HOGARTH he was sure to find a friend;
 He could not fear, and therefore might commend.
 But when his spirit, rous'd by honest Shame,
 Shook off that Lethargy, and soar'd to Fame,
 When, with the pride of Man, resolv'd and strong,
 He scorn'd those fears which did his Honour wrong,
 And, on himself determin'd to rely,
 Brought forth his labours to the public eye,
 No Friend, in Thee, could such a rebel know;
 He had desert, and HOGARTH was his foe.

SOULS of a tim'rous cast, of petty name
 In ENVY's court, not yet quite dead to shame,
 May some remorse, some qualms of Conscience feel,
 And suffer Honour to abate their Zeal,
 But the man, truly and completely great,
 Allows no rule of action but his hate;

F

Thro'

Thro' ev'ry bar he bravely breaks his way,
 Passion his Principle, and Parts his prey.
 Mediums in Vice and Virtue speak a mind
 Within the pale of Temperance confin'd;
 The daring Spirit scorns her narrow schemes,
 And, good or bad, is always in extremes.

MAN's practice duly weigh'd, thro' ev'ry age
 On the same plan hath ENVY form'd her rage.
 'Gainst those whom Fortune hath our rivals made
 In way of Science, and in way of Trade,
 Stung with mean Jealousy she arms her spite,
 First works, then views their ruin with delight.
 Our HOGARTH here a grand improver shines,
 And nobly on the gen'ral plan refines;
 He, like himself, o'erleaps the servile bound;
 Worth is his mark, wherever Worth is found.
 Should painters only his vast wrath suffice?
 Genius in ev'ry walk is Lawful Prize.
 'Tis a gross insult to his o'ergrown state;
 His love to merit is to feel his hate.

When WILKES, our Countryman, our common friend,
 Arose his King, his Country to defend,

When

When tools of pow'r he bar'd to public view,
 And from their holes the sneaking cowards drew,
 When Rancour found it far beyond her reach
 To soil his honour, and his truth impeach,
 What could induce Thee, at a time and place,
 Where manly Foes had blush'd to shew their face,
 To make that effort, which must damn thy name,
 And sink thee deep, deep in thy grave with shame?
 Did Virtue move Thee? no, 'twas Pride, rank Pride,
 And if Thou had'st not done it, Thou had'st dy'd.
 MALICE (who, disappointed of her end,
 Whether to work the bane of Foe or Friend,
 Preys on herself, and, driven to the Stake,
 Gives Virtue that revenge she scorns to take)
 Had kill'd Thee, tott'ring on life's utmost verge,
 Had WILKES and LIBERTY escap'd thy scourge.

WHEN that GREAT CHARTER, which our Fathers bought
 With their best blood, was into question brought;
 When, big with ruin, o'er each English head
 Vile Slav'ry hung, suspended by a thread;
 When LIBERTY, all trembling and aghast,
 Fear'd for the future, knowing what was past;

When

When ev'ry breast was chill'd with deep despair,
 Till Reason pointed out that PRATT was there;
 Lurking, most Ruffian-like, behind a screen,
 So plac'd all things to see, himself unseen,
 VIRTUE, with due contempt, saw HOGARTH stand,
 The murd'rous pencil in his palsied hand.
 What was the cause of Liberty to him,
 Or what was honour? let them sink or swim,
 So he may gratify without controul
 The mean resentments of his selfish soul.
 Let Freedom perish, if, to Freedom true,
 In the same ruin WILKES may perish too.

WITH all the symptoms of assur'd decay,
 With age and sickness pinch'd, and worn away,
 Pale quiv'ring lips, lank cheeks, and falt'ring tongue,
 The Spirits out of tune, the Nerves unstrung,
 Thy Body shrivell'd up, thy dim eyes sunk
 Within their sockets deep, thy weak hams shrunk
 The body's weight unable to sustain,
 The stream of life scarce trembling thro' the vein,
 More than half-kill'd by honest truths, which fell,
 Thro' thy own fault, from men who wish'd thee well,
 Can

EPISTLE TO WILLIAM HOGARTH. 21

Can'st thou, e'en thus, thy thoughts to vengeance give,
And, dead to all things else, to Malice live?
Hence, Dotard, to thy closet, shut thee in,
By deep repentance wash away thy sin;
From haunts of men to shame and sorrow fly,
And, on the verge of death, learn how to die.

VAIN exhortation! wash the Ethiop white,
Discharge the leopard's spots, turn day to night,
Controul the course of Nature, bid the deep
Hush at thy Pygmy voice her waves to sleep,
Perform things passing strange, yet own thy art
Too weak to work a change in such a heart;
That ENVY which was woven in the frame
At first, will to the last remain the same.
Reason may droop, may die, but Envy's rage
Improves by time, and gathers strength from age.
Some, and not few, vain triflers with the pen,
Unread, unpractis'd in the ways of men,
Tell us that ENVY, who with giant stride
Stalks thro' the vale of life by Virtue's side,
Retreats when she hath drawn her latest breath,
And calmly hears her praises after death.

G

To

22 EPISTLE TO WILLIAM HOGARTH.

To such observers HOGARTH gives the lie;
 Worth may be hears'd, but Envy cannot die;
 Within the mansion of his gloomy breast,
 A mansion suited well to such a guest;
 Immortal, unimpair'd she rears her head,
 And damns alike the living and the dead.

OFT have I known Thee, HOGARTH, weak and vain,
 Thyself the idol of thy aukward strain,
 Thro' the dull measure of a summer's day,
 In phrase most vile, prate long long hours away,
 Whilst Friends with Friends all gaping sit, and gaze,
 To hear a HOGARTH babble HOGARTH's praise.
 But if athwart thee Interruption came,
 And mention'd with respect some Ancient's name,
 Some Ancient's name, who in the days of yore
 The crown of Art with greatest honour wore,
 How have I seen thy coward cheek turn pale,
 And blank confusion sieze thy mangled tale?
 How hath thy Jealousy to madness grown,
 And deem'd his praise injurious to thy own?
 Then without mercy did thy wrath make way,
 And Arts and Artists all became thy prey;

Then

EPISTLE TO WILLIAM HOGARTH. 23

Then didst Thou trample on establish'd rules,
And proudly levell'd all the antient schools,
Condemn'd those works, with praise thro' ages grac'd,
Which you had never seen, or could not taste.

“ But would mankind have true perfection shewn,

“ It must be found in labours of my own.

“ I dare to challenge in one single piece,

“ Th' united force of ITALY and GREECE.”

Thy eager hand the curtain then undrew,
And brought the boasted Master-piece to view.

Spare thy remarks---say not a single word---

The Picture seen, why is the Painter heard?

Call not up Shame and Anger in our cheeks;

Without a Comment SIGISMUNDA speaks.

POOR SIGISMUNDA! what a Fate is thine!

DRYDEN, the great High-Priest of all the Nine,

Reviv'd thy name, gave what a Muse could give,

And in his Numbers bad thy Mem'ry live;

Gave thee those soft sensations, which might move

And warm the coldest Anchorite to Love;

Gave thee that Virtue, which could curb desire,

Refine and Consecrate Love's headstrong fire;

Gave

24 EPISTLE TO WILLIAM HOGARTH.

Gave thee those griefs, which made the Stoic feel,
 And call'd compassion forth from hearts of steel;
 Gave thee that firmness which our sex may shame,
 And made Man bow to Woman's juster claim,
 So that our tears, which from Compassion flow,
 Seem to debase thy dignity of woe.
 But O, how much unlike! how fall'n! how chang'd!
 How much from Nature and herself estrang'd!
 How totally depriv'd of all the pow'rs
 To shew her feelings, and awaken our's,
 Doth SIGISMUNDA now devoted stand,
 The helpless victim of a Dauber's hand!

BUT why, *my* HOGARTH, such a progress made,
 So rare a Pattern for the Sign-Post trade,
 In the full force, and whirlwind of thy pride,
 Why was *Heroic* Painting laid aside?
 Why is It not resum'd? Thy Friends at Court,
 Men all in place and pow'r, crave thy support;
 Be grateful then for once, and, thro' thy field
 Of Politics, thy *Epic* Pencil wield,
 Maintain the cause, which they, good lack! avow,
 And would maintain too, but they know not how.

Thro'

Thro' ev'ry *Pannel* let thy Virtue tell
 How BUTE prevail'd, How PITT and TEMPLE fell !
 How ENGLAND's sons (whom They conspir'd to blefs
 Against our Will, with insolent fuccess)
 Approve their fall, and with addreffes run,
 How got, God knows, to hail the SCOTTISH Sun ;
 Point out our fame in war, when vengeance, hurl'd
 From the ftrong arm of Juftice, fhook the world ;
 Thine, and thy Country's honour to encrease
 Point out the honours of fucceeding Peace ;
 Our *Moderation*, Christian-like, display,
 Shew, what we got, and what we gave away.
 In Colours, dull and heavy as the tale,
 Let a *State-Chaos* thro' the whole prevail.

BUT, of events regardless, whilst the Mufe
 Perhaps with too much heat her theme purfues ;
 While her quick Spirits rouze at FREEDOM's call,
 And ev'ry drop of blood is turn'd to gall,
 Whilst a dear Country, and an injur'd Friend,
 Urge my ftrong anger to the bitt'reft end,
 Whilst honeft trophies to revenge are rais'd,
 Let not One real Virtue pafs unprais'd.

H

Juftic

26 EPISTLE TO WILLIAM HOGARTH.

Justice with equal course bids Satire flow,
And loves the Virtue of her greatest foe.

O ! that I here could that rare Virtue mean
Which scorns the rule of Envy, Pride and Spleen,
Which springs not from the labour'd Works of Art,
But hath its rise from Nature in the heart,
Which in itself with happiness is crown'd,
And spreads with joy the blessing all around !
But Truth forbids, and in these simple lays,
Contented with a diff'rent kind of Praise,
Must HOGARTH stand ; that Praise which GENIUS gives,
In Which to latest time the *Artist* lives,
But not the *Man* ; which, rightly understood,
May make Us great, but cannot make us good.
That Praise be HOGARTH'S ; freely let him wear
That Wreath which GENIUS wove, and planted there.
Foe as I am, should Envy tear it down,
Myself would labour to replace the Crown.

IN walks of Humor, in that cast of Style,
Which, probing to the quick, yet makes us smile;
In Comedy, thy nat'ral road to fame,
Nor let me call it by a meaner name,

Where

Where a beginning, middle, and an end
 Are aptly joined ; where parts on parts depend,
 Each made for each, as bodies for their soul,
 So as to form one true and perfect whole,
 Where a plain story to the eye is told,
 Which we conceive the moment we behold,
 HOGARTH unrivall'd stands, and shall engage
 Unrivall'd praise to the most distant age.

How could'st Thou then to Shame perversely run,
 And tread that path which Nature bad Thee shun,
 Why did ambition overleap her rules,
 And thy vast parts become the sport of Fools?
 By diff'rent methods diff'rent Men excell,
 But where is He, who can do all things well?
 Humour thy Province, for some monstrous crime
 Pride struck Thee with the frenzy of *Sublime*.
 But, when the work was finish'd, could thy mind
 So partial be, and to herself so blind,
 What with contempt All view'd, to view with awe,
 Nor see those faults which ev'ry Blockhead saw?
 Blush, Thou vain Man, and if desire of Fame,
 Founded on real Art, thy thoughts inflame,

To

28 EPISTLE TO WILLIAM HOGARTH.

To quick destruction SIGISMUNDA give,
And let her mem'ry die, that thine may live.

BUT should fond Candour, for her Mercy fake,
With pity view, and pardon this mistake;
Or should Oblivion, to thy wish most kind,
Wipe off that stain, nor leave one trace behind;
Of ARTS *despis'd*, of ARTIST'S by thy frown
Aw'd from just hopes, of rising Worth kept down,
Of all thy meanness thro' this mortal race,
Can'st Thou the living memory erase,
Or shall not Vengeance follow to the grave,
And give back just that measure which You gave?
With so much merit, and so much success,
With so much pow'r to curse, so much to bless,
Would He have been Man's friend, instead of foe,
HOGARTH had been a little God below.
Why then, like savage Giants, fam'd of old,
Of whom in Scripture Story we are told,
Dost Thou in cruelty that strength employ,
Which Nature meant to save, not to destroy,
Why dost Thou, all in horrid pomp array'd,
Sit grinning o'er the ruins Thou hast made?

Most

EPISTLE TO WILLIAM HOGARTH. 29

Most rank Ill-nature must applaud thy art;
But even Candour must condemn thy heart.

FOR Me, who warm and zealous for my Friend,
In spite of railing thousands, will commend,
And, no less warm and zealous 'gainst my foes,
Spite of commending thousands, will oppose,
I dare thy worst, with scorn behold thy rage,
But with an eye of Pity view thy Age,
Thy feeble Age, in which, as in a glass,
We see how Men to dissolution pass.
Thou *wretched Being*, whom, on Reason's plan,
So chang'd, so lost, I cannot call a Man,
What could persuade Thee, at this time of life,
To launch afresh into the Sea of Strife?
Better for Thee, scarce crawling on the earth,
Almost as much a child as at thy birth,
To have resign'd in peace thy parting breath,
And sunk unnotic'd in the arms of Death.
Why would thy grey grey hairs resentment brave,
Thus to go down with sorrow to the grave?
Now, by my Soul, it makes me blush to know
My Spirits could descend to such a foe.

I

Whatever

30 EPISTLE TO WILLIAM HOGARTH

Whatever cause the vengeance might provoke,
It seems rank Cowardice to give the stroke.

SURE 'tis a curse which angry Fates impose,
To mortify man's arrogance, that Those
Who're fashion'd of some better sort of clay,
Much sooner than the common herd decay.
What bitter pangs must humbled GENIUS feel,
In their last hours, to view a SWIFT and STEELE ?
How must ill-boding horrors fill her breast,
When She beholds Men, mark'd above the rest
For qualities most dear, plung'd from that height,
And sunk, deep sunk, in second Childhood's night ?
Are Men, indeed, such things, and are the best
More subject to this evil, than the rest,
To drivel out whole years of Idiot breath,
And sit the Monuments of living Death ?
O, galling circumstance to human pride !
Abasing Thought, but not to be denied !
With curious Art the Brain too finely wrought
Preys on herself, and is destroy'd by Thought.
Constant Attention wears the active mind,
Blots out her pow'rs, and leaves a blank behind.

But

EPISTLE TO WILLIAM HOGARTH. 3^d

But let not Youth, to insolence allied,
In heat of blood, in full career of pride,
Possess'd of GENIUS, with unhallow'd rage
Mock the infirmities of rev'rend age.
The greatest GENIUS to this Fate may bow ;
REYNOLDS, in time, may be like HOGARTH NOW.

F I N I S.

EPISTLE TO WILLIAM HOGARTH.

But not Youth, to infatuation blind,
In heat of blood, in full career of youth,
Reckless of Conscience, with unbridled rage
Mock the infirmities of old age.
The greatest Genius to this Time may bow;
Mortals, in time, may be like Hogarth now.



C I N I S

